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"TO TH TEMPLE,"

BY SIR GEORGE C M. BIRDWOOD, C.S.I.

"To the T ple," front view.

"To the ple," side view.

THE AJAN CAVE-PAINTINGS,

BY MR N GRIFFITHS.

Illustrat 44 Text-Blocks.

RAM SINGH DEL MAYO SCHOOL OF ART LAHOR

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The Journal of Indian Art and Industry.

"TO THE TEMPLE."

I AM truly grateful for the opportunity most considerately afforded me by Mr. William Griggs of reproducing, in the *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*, some letters that have appeared during the closing year, in the *Bombay Gazette* and *Pioneer Mail*, on Mr. G. K. Mhatre's remarkable statuette, in plaster of Paris, entitled "To the Temple." The first letter on the subject appeared in the *Bombay Gazette* of the 26th of November, 1896, and consisted of the whole body of a letter of the 6th idem, written by me to a private correspondent in Bombay, a copy of which was simultaneously communicated by me to Mr. Grattan Geary expressly for publication. It was as follows,—excepting that I have reproduced in italics the erroneous passages in the letter, and have added, in one or two places, the words contained within brackets:—

If I have left your letter of the 4th of last May unanswered for six months, it is not that I have neglected the purpose of it. I have never received greater pleasure than from the photograph sent with it of Mr. G. K. Mhatre's statuette *in marble* of a Hindu girl on her way—"To the Temple;" and I have so long delayed acknowledging the receipt of it, only because I have been all this time showing it everywhere, and taking advice everywhere, before answering your question as to the advisability of sending Mr. Mhatre to Europe to complete his studies of an art in which his success is so assured.

I can now say that the unanimous advice I have re ived is that, until Mr. Mhatre has fully developed his
own spontaneous style, and his remarkable mastery nanipulative subtleties, he ought, on no account, to be
brought under the teaching of any European sculpto struction in the fine arts, plastic or pictorial, is worthless
without the intuitive faculty for proficiency in them alone makes the great painter or sculptor; for in fine
art there is no place for other than positive excellen second place,—those only who reach its height being
worthy of the name of artist. But where there is t rn genius for them, it is best left to develop of itself
until it attains to the full form of its own constituti l temper, before being subjected to the authority and
discipline, and the consequent general culture, of a minating instruction, present or past.

Mr. Mhatre one sees, at a first glance, posses genius for creation in sculpture, the most arduous, and
therefore the greatest of the fine arts, and which a hose endowed with a feeling for beauty and grandeur
with the noblest pleasure the human breast can kn

For its distinction of style "To the Temple Mhatre's work alone, and not another's in any tittle,
although it often suggests to me some of the earli of Canova, of whom young Mhatre has probably never
heard. In its technique it is wonderful; and tho y be biased by my instinctive sympathy with an Indian
artist, I believe myself to be moved solely by art ion when, every time I look on the photograph of Mr.
Mhatre's statuette, I derive from its contemplati heightened delight.

In a word, "To the Temple" is already a l masterpiece, and an unequivocal pledge of the com-
pletest future mastery in the art to which Mr. M devote himself. I, indeed, doubt if any living English
sculptor could produce a work in which the refin evating inspirations of the artist, and the sleights of his
technical dexterities would give so unaffected an n of truth to nature as we find in young Mhatre's so to
say, "Diploma piece."

The art of art is to create the illusion of a hi ity, but its supreme felicity is when this is altogether
natural; and as nature is ever most enchanting e contrivances of the charms she may owe to art are
concealed, so the utmost perfection of art is found seems to be nature still. It is in this deliberate view
that, as I hold, Mr. Mhatre's "To the Temple" at kes a first place as a work of plastic art. If the photo-
graph is examined with a powerful hand lens, an elming impression is made on you of the marvellous
refinement of the modulation of its flesh surfaces, the precision and exquisite delicacy of *the sculptor's*
touch both on the flesh and the drapery surfaces; his merely technical skill, as well as in its grace and
dignity, and harmoniously balanced composition the figure is Greek of the Greeks.

This is largely due to Mr. Mhatre having w *directly from the marble block, without any school of*
art instruction, relying on the sole light of his p yan instincts; and with his own hands and not those
of any hireling "ghost." This last fact it is wh explains the fine finish and warm reality of his flesh
surfaces.

In so far as the figure is differentiated fro k by its sweet, spiritual beauty, some might attribute
this to the influence of the Christian west on t neration of Hindus, but I see in it the reflection of [that
sentiment for] the sanctity of woman, and of t life centred in her, which has always proved the sure
foundation of the social life of the Hindus, an this day the distinctive note of Hinduism.

In short, I know of no modern statue so tractive to me as Mr. Mhatre's "To the Temple." The
only teachers the creator of it need go to are nt Greece, as they still live in their work among the
public Museums of Italy, France, and Engl he must fully disclose his own originality in Bombay;

and I would appeal to the wealthy Bhattias and Bunyas among his own countrymen, and, among foreigners, to the wealthy Parsees of Bombay, and to all Englishmen in the Western Presidency, who may, from time to time, have the opportunity of patronising art,—I would earnestly appeal to them all,—to forward to Mr. Mhatre the remunerative commissions he has so well earned at their hands. With Mr. Mhatre among you, if he is quick at catching a likeness, there is no necessity for commissioning any sculptor in the United Kingdom for portrait busts or statues of Bombay worthies, native or European. But I hope his co-religionists will take a pride in giving him both private and public commissions for ideal subjects, statues, and groups of statues, and bas reliefs, illustrative of their national epics, and, within specified limits, of the mythology of their religion; [for] mythological subjects imperatively demanding a conventional treatment of the human frame, amounting to what in fine art would be regarded as a monstrosity, should be excluded; and that equally in the interest of religion and art. Thus, for example, it would be impossible to represent Siva, in his more dreaded aspects, otherwise than in the strange conventionalised forms familiar to us all, without detriment to those divine ideas these often repulsive forms symbolise. But, Saraswati, with her lettered scroll, bright Kamadeo [with his flowery dart], and joyous Krishna [with the Gopies], and the heroes and heroines of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, can be represented quite artistically in sculpture without any abatement of the force of their popular divinity. The "To the Temple" of Mr. Mhatre I would have reproduced life size and placed at the foot of the steps leading to the porch of the black basalt temple in the Girgaum Road, where, between thirty and forty years ago, I so often used to observe Mr. Venayekrao Wassadeojee and Mr. Narayen Dinanathjee, and other of my Hindu friends worshipping. When in this way Mr. Mhatre has made a little money, he might with benefit come to Europe for three years, spent between Rome and Paris and London in studying the works of ancient Greek sculptors, and cultivating the society there of the sculptors of modern Italy, France, and England. He will have but little to learn from the latter, *while some, the best of them, have this at least to learn from him, to hew their statues from the stone themselves, and to work them, from first to last, with their own hands and not of some mercenary "ghost."*

But Mr. Mhatre's statuette suggests thoughts beyond the thoughts inspired by any promising piece of sculpture; and although it is impossible to enlarge on them on this occasion, I cannot help adding that, the artistic genius manifested by him, and the scientific capacity shown by Professor Bose of Calcutta, and the literary power of which so many Hindus, as well as one or two Parsees, of Bombay are just now giving evidence, are symptoms of a spiritual revival among the people of India of which no one can mistake the significance. Based on the rapidly developing material prosperity of the country, th[illegible] direct result of the *pax Britannica*, the gradual growth and fruitful future of this revival seem assured, or are re[illegible]dered dubious only by the fear of their being blighted by a too close and oppressive contact with the alien moral [illegible] intellectual influences of the West. The problem therefore is, while enjoying the unspeakable blessings, i[illegible]rnal and external peace and security, of British rule, to avoid the destructive effects of a foreign administr[illegible] predominance on the indigenous literary, religious, and artistic culture of India, *i.e.* India of the Hindus. [illegible]e solution of this pressing problem the whole future of Hindu civilisation and the ultimate verdict of m[illegible] on the British occupation of India, emphatically depends. It is in this serious and dutiful spirit that I h[illegible]ways studied Indian art. As I have often before said, I regard the arts of India, not only as an admirer [illegible], but as one who has always recognised that in their infinite variety and yet living reality, and unmatch[illegible]ity, they afford a vital, and ubiquitously powerful rallying point for the spiritual revival of the race of Bra[illegible]al Hindus, and for the regeneration of their entire sacro-sanct civilisation: and that to needlessly destroy t[illegible]itional culture and personality of a great historical race is the worst and most odious crime one nation can [illegible] upon another, and an unpardonable sin against their common humanity.

To this Mr. Edwin Greenwood, the Principa[illegible] Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy School of Art, replied on the 5th December, 1896, in the followi[illegible]:—

TO THE EDITOR OF T[illegible]AY GAZETTE."

Sir,—It must be a very great pleasure to Mr. Mha[illegible]s friends to find that his work has received such enthusiastic approval from Sir G. Birdwood. I share t[illegible]ure with them, but I wish Sir George had been as accurate in his statements as he is generous and sym[illegible]n his praises. There are two mistakes in matters of fact which it is desirable to correct. The first is of [illegible]e importance, but it is as well to say that this figure is not what is usually known as a "statuette"; n[illegible]r. Mhatre "wrought it directly from the marble block." The figure, which is a statue of a young woma[illegible]a[illegible]ly five feet high; and it is in plaster, not marble, Mr. Mhatre at the time he modelled it having never ha[illegible] chisel. The other mistake is very important, for Sir Geo. Birdwood's statement involves the whole ques[illegible]he relation of Europe to India in matters of art, as well as the minor one of the value of schools of art in t[illegible]ry. Sir G. Birdwood says, referring directly, and in detail, to the artistic and technical qualities of Mhatr[illegible] and not to any matter of sentiment or subject:—"If the photograph (of the statue) is examined with a [illegible]hand lens, an overwhelming impression is made on you of the marvellous refinement of the modulation[illegible]esh surfaces, and of the precision and exquisite delicacy of the sculptor's touch, both on the flesh and o[illegible]ery surfaces; and in this, merely technical skill, as well as in its grace and dignity, and harmoniously ba[illegible]nposition and pose, the figure is Greek of the Greeks. This is largely due to Mr. Mhatre having wr[illegible]ectly from the marble block, *without any school of art instruction*, relying on the sole light of his pristi[illegible]stincts."

Now, the words above which I have put in italics [illegible] convey to any ordinary reader the notion that Mhatre is a person who never received any instruction [illegible]of art, and that the admirable character of his work is largely due to his relying solely on his pristine [illegible]cts and avoiding all contact with a school of art. Whether Sir G. Birdwood meant this or not, I thi[illegible] will agree with me that this is the natural meaning of his words, and I am therefore bound, in ju[illegible] Bombay School of Art in general, and Mr. Griffiths, the late Principal, in particular, to state that M[illegible]n a student of this school since 1891, and is

so at this moment. He studied under Mr. Griffiths in our modelling and sculpture class for at least a year, and has never had any instruction in art except such as he has received here. Mhatre's work is in all technical respects purely European, and it is in fact the union of this higher technique with Hindu sentiment and subject which has given Sir G. Birdwood so much pleasure. If Mhatre's sculpture be really of "Greek of the Greeks" in style, it shows that he has been profoundly affected by the "milieu" in which he has worked. Though very few people know anything about this school and museum, we have here what I suppose is the best collection of casts of Greek and Græco-Roman sculpture that exists on this side of Suez, and no student can go in or out of the place without seeing them. I venture to think that no study of the sculpture of Elephanta or Walkeshwar would have helped Mhatre to model the girl going "To the Temple," a statue which, curiously enough, is now placed in the midst of our Greek antiques in the school hall, where anyone may see it who chooses to come here between 7 and 5 o'clock.

It seems to me that if half of what Sir G. Birdwood says about Mhatre's statue be true, that the case for schools of art in India is not a hopeless one after all. When I last saw Sir G. Birdwood, he referred to the future work of the schools of art in India as not likely to take any more important form than the accurate making of locks and keys and their suitable decoration if required. Perhaps, now, he may grant the possibility of their doing more than that; even of their materially assisting in that renaissance of the Hindu spirit, which he has so much at heart, by helping the natives of the country to means of artistic expression in directions where they themselves are so weak. I do not know what all Sir G. Birdwood's unanimous friends will think of this. They say that until "Mr. Mhatre has developed his own spontaneous style and his remarkable mastery of manipulative subtleties, he ought on no account to be brought under the teaching of any European sculptor." But the fact is, as I have said, that Mhatre has never been brought under any other than European teaching, and as Sir G. Birdwood approves of the result so far, I can only hope they may reconsider their verdict. I may say that, in my opinion, Mhatre's work, good as it may be, does not rank by any means with that of the best European sculptors in knowledge and technique, and therefore, as there is no one here who can practically teach him anything more in that direction, it is a pity that while he is young and capable of further training (and no man continues for many years capable of this), he should not have the best that can be got. If there is no other way of his getting the money to go to Europe for a few years, I should of course be very glad to see him employed in work worthy of his ability—as Sir G. Birdwood says, in ideal subjects rather than portraiture. In the meantime, however, while the grass is growing the steed is starving. In order to help him a little, I offered him, only yesterday, a small post as a drawing teacher in the School of Art (I am afraid Sir G. Birdwood and the S. E. P. I. A. will not approve—neither indeed do I), but I am pleased to say that, to-d… he has declined it. Sir G. Birdwood's letter has come like the rain in the Deccan and I trust his eloquent …al to Mhatre's fellow countrymen will induce them to help him.

I do not know whether the Bombay Art Socie… …ld do anything to help Mhatre; if they could, their name might possibly be kept in remembrance for a littl… . The patrons of the society seem to be anxious to encourage representations of heroic ladies in va… …istressful and pathetic situations who never put in an appearance at the exhibitions. Would it not be a… …ether more satisfactory thing to help this dainty little dame of Mhatre's to put off her frail form of fly-bl… …ster, and appear, as is her due, in an imperishable body of beautiful white marble; in this way she might … a "joy for ever," otherwise she can but be "a lovely apparition sent to be a moment's ornament."—Yo… ,

E. Greenwood,

Principal, Sir J. J. School of Art.

My reply to Mr. Greenwood, dated th… …f December, 1896, and published in the *Bombay Gazette* of the 7th January, 1897, was as f… —

TO THE EDIT… …E "BOMBAY GAZETTE."

Sir,—I am deeply grateful to Mr. Greenw… promptly exposing, in his letter to you of the 28th ult., the two errors into which I fell in my letter o… Mhatre's statuette, "To the Temple," published in the *Bombay Gazette* of the 26th ult. I was betrayed in… …errors by the letter of the English friend in Bombay who sent me the photograph of the statuette. I had los… of the letter in circulating it with the photograph; but, when writing in reply to my friend on the 6th ult., I … …n the information before me,—as I had apprehended it,—that the statuette had been produced without Mr. M… …aving first modelled it in clay, or even draughted it out on paper; and that he had had no School of Art in… …n in modelling, and had done the statuette entirely at home, and of his own inspiration; all he had learn… the Bombay School of Art being ordinary drawing. I took it for granted, therefore, that the statuette w… …rble. No one who saw the photograph even suspected that the original was in anything but marble; an… …y criticism on the photograph I ever heard was that it had been taken in too strong a light, which made… …e too strongly, and destroyed its softer shadows. But this, as regards the merit of the statuette, is quit… …aterial point. The power of an artist is especially shown when, through his manipulative dexterity [not "… …rickeries"], he is able to give the appearance of a nobler material to any baser one in which he may have… his work; but I cannot claim any additional merit on this account in the present instance, as the dece… …ity and transparency in the reproduction of Mr. Mhatre's statuette is possibly wholly due to its photogra… …is a disappointment to me that, while this in no way detracts from the transcendent mastery of Mr. … …odelling, it certainly is not due to any glyptic skill on his part. The more serious error into which … neglecting to state exactly what Mr. Mhatre's School of Art training has been. I will only add tha… …lvertent, and wholly without prejudice, and that I regret it deeply. As to Mr. Mhatre's future, it was… …rst of living sculptors in this country who strenuously advised me not to have him subjected to an… …raining. But this was under the apprehension of his having wrought his statuette in marble. … …re has had no training in the use of the chisel, and no experience in the exercise of the other te… …e sculptor's art, he ought certainly to be sent to Europe,

to acquire them at Rome and Paris, Berlin and London, and I hope means will at once be provided in Bombay for this being done, and that by the Government, supplemented, so far as private support goes, by commissions, rather than by direct pecuniary contributions.

I will only add that Mr. Greenwood somewhat misapprehends my views in regard to Schools of Art in India, which, however, are sufficiently indicated in the last paragraph of my letter of the 6th November last. They are part and parcel of our administration of India, which, in theory at least, is directed to the redemption,—economical, social, political, religious, and artistic,—of India, by the people of India themselves; and, while this theory is carried into practice by our Schools of Art, as it pre-eminently is at Jeypore and in Bombay, and in some measure at Lahore, I am personally as loyal an advocate of Schools of Art as of any other department of our administration in India.

But I will not argue this point to-day, and would again acknowledge the extreme courtesy with which Mr. Greenwood has corrected the unhappy inaccuracies of my previous letter on Mr. Mhatre's beautiful and charming work, "To the Temple," which I am unfeignedly glad to credit to the training of the Bombay School of Art.—Yours, &c.,

Dec. 18. GEORGE BIRDWOOD.

The next letter I reproduce is one published in the *Pioneer Mail* of the 31st December, 1896, written by R. F. Chisholm, Esq., F.R.I.B.A., Assistant Engineer on the Madras Railway, and a Member of the Madras University [Arts and Engineering Faculties]:—

AN ART CRITIC ASTRAY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "PIONEER MAIL."

SIR,—Has your attention been called to certain correspondence which appeared in *The Bombay Gazette* recently, on the subject of a statue entitled "To the Temple," executed by a student of the Bombay School of Arts? A few years ago you were good enough to publish a letter of mine on "Indian art work," and I would crave space for this letter, as a commentary on what I then wrote. The first letter of the correspondence alluded to is from Sir George Birdwood, "than whom," to quote official language, "a greater art authority does not exist." The great art authority has, in this instance, surpassed himself, for setting aside his opinions, his facts are as ludicrously wrong as when he dubbed a solitary lead-glazed pot, made by a school of arts student, a specimen of the *Historical Glazed Earthenware of Madras*, a ware which never had any existence at all, except in the imagination of the great art authority! The phot[illegible]ph which I now forward to you, sent separately, was some time back sent to the great art authority with a res[illegible] comical as it was unexpected! Every one who saw the statuette in the last Fine Arts Exhibition at B[illegible] hailed it as a most promising piece of student's work, hardly sufficiently original to claim extended notic[illegible] when the great art authority sees the photograph, we are made to feel what dolts and asses we have all be[illegible] we have had a genius of the first water in our midst without even being aware of it! The great art a[illegible], without troubling himself about facts, does not hesitate to declare to the whole world that the artist is a [illegible]enius—that he must on no account be permitted to come to Europe, where his heaven-born gifts will be [illegible]nated by European instruction, that it is doubtful whether any English sculptor could produce a work "in [illegible]he refining and elevating inspirations of the artist and the sleights of his technical dexterities could give so[illegible]al an expression of truth!" Warming with his subject, the great art authority rises to greater heights; [illegible] us the inspired artist worked "direct from the marble" (whatever that may mean), that he had no such [illegible]dening impediments to deal with as the baneful "School of Arts instruction;" he worked "with his own [illegible] the light of his pristine Aryan instincts!" And this fact, he says, chiefly explains "the fine finish and w[illegible] of his flesh tints,"—I beg pardon, "*surfaces*." We are asked to examine the photo with a powerful han[illegible] note "the precision and exquisite delicacy of the sculptor's touch!" Then the great art authority rise[illegible]er, he seems to hug himself on the keenness of his own perceptions—the privilege of giving this geni[illegible]thinking world! You glow in the reflected light of the virtue he sheds around, you feel ennobled in [illegible] these intricacies of high art rendered clear to your dull understanding! When—alas and alas! that I [illegible] have to write it—Mr. Greenwood, the Principal of the Bombay School of Arts, points out in a subseque[illegible]er that the genius did not work direct from the marble, as there was no marble to work from, the statue [illegible]g in "*plaster*" only, and that the light of "pristine Aryan instincts" of the genius was at least dimmed by S[illegible]f Arts instruction, the gentleman being an ordinary student of the School of Arts—surrounded as he would [illegible]ondon or Paris by the masterpieces of Greek art, from one of which he appears to have taken the particul[illegible] of his statuette! The great art authority's letter, read again by the light of these facts, is like a chapter i[illegible]ck. Surely nothing more ludicrous is to be found in the whole history of art criticism than the great art [illegible], with a powerful lens, noticing the delicacy of point work, the exquisite touch of the sculptor's tool on-[illegible]*r cast!*—Bil Stumps's mark, and Sam Weller's Hextra magnifying Hopera glass, pale before this real p[illegible] There is one gleam of light, however, in the long column of eulogy—the pose of the lady is said to be "G[illegible]e Greeks;" it is so, there is no denying the fact, the pose is really Greek, it is the pose of the celebrate[illegible]Belvedere turned into a woman! The Apollo bends the left leg, with the head thrown slightly to the [illegible]Hindoo lady bends the right leg, with the head thrown slightly to the right—much of the charm of the [illegible]s from the wonderful grace of this pose, which, under the circumstances, can hardly be called original[illegible]tanding this, the work is highly meritorious, reflecting credit alike on both master and pupil. My o[illegible]ting is in no way to decry the work of the student, but to call attention to the excited, extravaga[illegible]ess statements of a man regarded by many people as a "great art authority;" indeed, when we co[illegible] the letter came and the class for whom it was intended, the general tone savours so much of "[illegible] gallery" that its absolute sincerity seems questionable.

R. F. CHISHOLM.

The last letter in the matter I must beg y to publish is a private one of the 25th of June last, addressed by Mr. Mhatre himself to me :–

SIR,—It is with a feeling of the greatest pleasure a nd gratitude that I solicit the favour of your accepting my heartful thanks to you, and at the same time beg to be excused for delaying so long to do the same.

Sir, you might not know how happy I felt to read in the columns of the *Bombay Gazette*, one morning, a long letter written by your able hand to an Englishman in Bombay, with the heading "G. K. Mhatre's statue, 'To the Temple,'" and how grateful I felt to find an Englishman taking such a keen interest in giving encouragement to a poor native lad of India; and at the same time I felt much to find that there was scarcely a man in our own soil of India who could give some sort of encouragement to a poor student of his own clime.

I must here confess that I am in very poor circumstances, and therefore unable to meet the expenses required in taking in hand large works; I am therefore quite at a loss to know how I could commence with my other work without some pecuniary help. I therefore naturally look for help from persons like yourself, who can recommend my work to some big people in Europe, who could appreciate art and take pleasure to keep a large collection of art works in their halls and museum galleries. For the present, I am very willing to send my statue "To the Temple" to England, and if I could find some purchaser (not for its excellence, but merely with a view to further the prospects of a poor worker in art). If some generous people from there would help me to defray the luggage and insurance charges for the same, I would like to send my statue on small size representing Indian mythological subjects to England, if I were to know I c uld get any purchasers there; and I am sure I will get ready purchasers through the recommendations of a p son like yourself. As for the question of my visit to Europe, I think it is simply a dream, for I have no pro pect of getting such a large sum at my hand for the present, unless some generous people were to help me in hat request. You have said in your letter that I should develope to full extent my natural taste with respect to I dian subjects. Well, I am trying best to do so, still I would like once to see Art in its mother-land, and to see the works of the great masters of art there, and would be extremely felicitous to have the good fortune to work under the instruction of some of the best masters of the chisel and the brush there. I think it is quite essential that I should do so, in order to acquaint myself with some of the technical points in arts. By the by, I may here bring to your notice that my statue "To the Temple" is a life-size figure in plaster, and not in marble, as you are ed to suppose. Still, I can cut statue figures in marble.

I herewith beg to present you with two photos of y statue "To the Temple," and wish you could make any good use of the same, as you like it.

I would like to conclude this too long letter by arking that my due thanks are due to Mr. Griffiths, the late Principal, and Mr. Greenwood, the present Pri l, under whose instruction I had the good fortune to learn many useful things, and who have given me good ragement in pursuing my studies; and lastly, I beg to be excused for encroaching upon your most precious —I beg to remain, Sir, yours most obediently,

G. K. MHATRE.

Other letters have appeared in this co ndence,—some generously defending me against Mr. Chisholm, and others attacking me,- being anonymous, I cannot ask for their reproduction; while as regards the attack of them are so typical as Mr. Chisholm's, which I must be content to allow to stand em all. And I am content, for my whole anxiety in the matter is (1) to do justice to Mr. G od, which I trust I have fully done; and (2) to mitigate, so far as possible, the injustice d Mr. Mhatre through my blunder, the humiliation of which I feel acutely.

Whip Dog [St. Luke's] Day, 1897. GEORGE BIRDWOOD.

LI USTRATIONS.

1.—"To the Temple" 2.—"To the Temple" (side view).

2.—"To the Temple," by G. K. Mhatre.

(Side view).

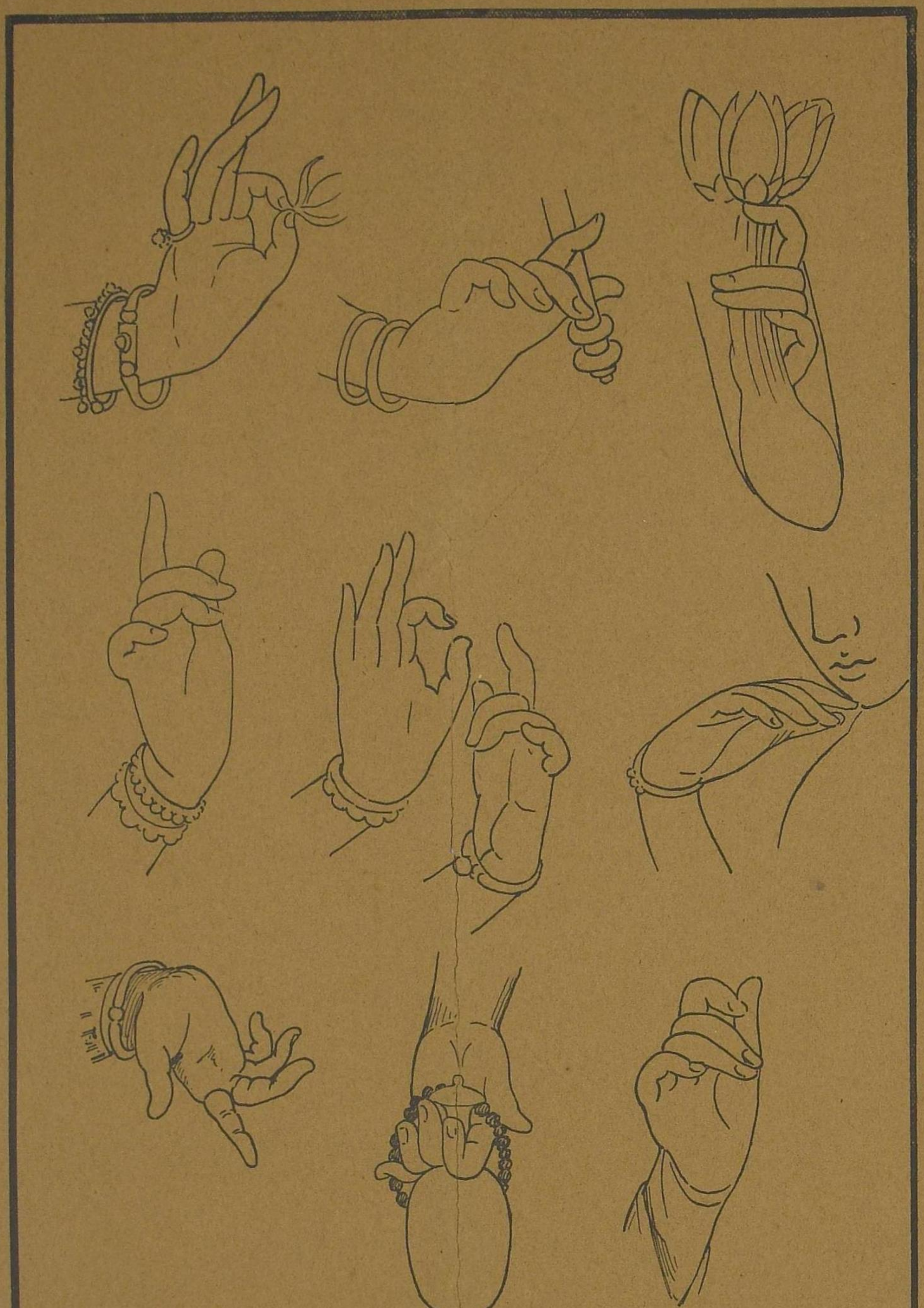
THE AJANTÂ CAVE-PAINTINGS.

BY order of the Secretary of State for India in Council, Mr. GRIFFITHS (late Principal of the Bombay School of Art) has brought out two sumptuously illustrated folio volumes, on "The Paintings in the Buddhist Cave-Temples of Ajantâ."* Mr. Griffiths was engaged for many years with a party of students from the Bombay School of Art, in making copies of the paintings in the caves; and a large selection of these copies is now published in the above work. The larger illustrations are executed in chromo-lithography and collotype, and the smaller in toned blocks. Specimens of the latter are here given, with extracts from Mr. Griffiths's descriptive text.

1 (9).—FROM WALL-PAINTING A[1], CAVE I.

In the detailed descriptions of the plates, an attempt is made to identify and elucidate the subjects and persons illustrated. Meanwhile, a word may be said about the general treatment, and especially the rendering of racial peculiarities. The slenderness of the Hindûs is always a surprise to the Occidental. These soft and supple forms belong to another world, and their true character seems beyond the grasp of artists accustomed to the antique and to the muscular bulk of European models. At Ajantâ no prejudices in favour of a Greek ideal, and no anatomical knowledge vexed the artist's interpretation of the forms he saw. Exaggeration of the long almond-shaped eye is, perhaps, the most pronounced mannerism, while to an English observer the familiar Oriental squatting position may appear over-frequent. Hands are put in with a pretty *maniéré* grace and truth of expression which, to those acquainted with Indian life, is full of suggestiveness. It is precisely thus that, to this day, supple wrists, palms, and fingers beseech, explain, deprecate and caress. A few outline sketches here given may convey an idea of the facility attained in this difficult detail [fig. 2 (7)]. The foot, however, is nearly always poorly drawn. An exaggeration of the feminine hip and breasts has ever been a snare to the Hindû sculptor, who seems to think more of the conventional phrases of poetry than of the actual form. In the paintings, however, there is more feeling for nature. Women are drawn in a great variety of positions, nude or so slightly clad that the shape is nowise concealed [fig. 1 (9)]. Views of the back and side,

* "The Paintings in the Buddhist Cave-Temples of Ajantâ." Two vols., Imperial folio, 22 by 15 inches. 76 Chromos, Maps and Plans, full-page plates; 85 page plates in collotype; and 88 text blocks. £10 - 10 - 0. Prepared for Subscribers by W. Griggs, Hanover Street, Peckham, London, 1897–8.

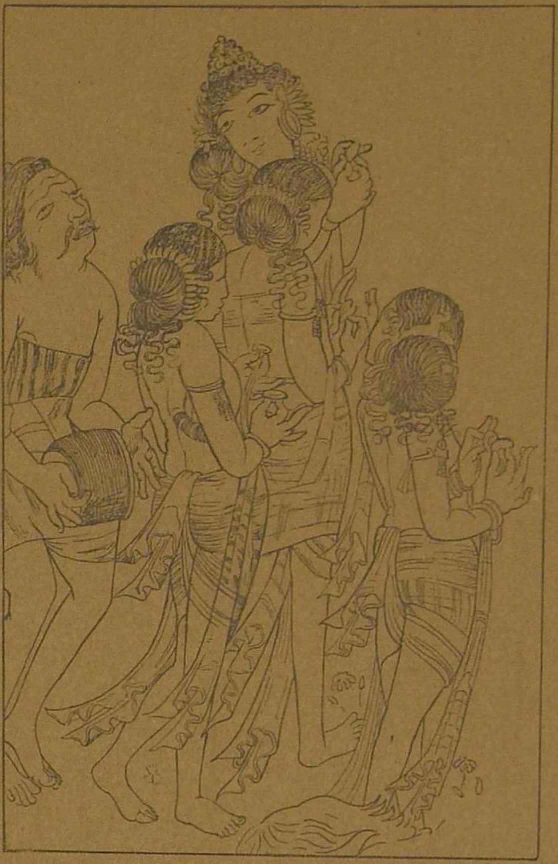


2 (7).—Hands from Wall-Paintings.

seldom seen in sculpture, are constantly given; the elusive grace of the half-averted form being charmingly rendered. The draperies, too, are thoroughly understood, and though the folds may be somewhat conventionally drawn, they express most thoroughly the peculiarities of the Oriental treatment of unsewn cloth, which, without a single stitch, pin, clasp, button, or other fastening, furnishes the most graceful, convenient and comfortable garments known to mankind [fig. 3 (10)].

Great pains are lavished on the correct rendering of the manifold fashions of hair-dressing. Sometimes it is frizzed in front with luxuriant ringlets, now unknown in feminine India. Or a chignon is tied at the back with a coronal of flowers over it, or large lotus blossoms are arranged among its masses. Sometimes knots of hair are looped at the side of the head and adorned with flowers, while the still prevalent fashion of confining it with chains of woven wire or jewelled string, attached to elaborate ornaments of beaten work in gold and silver, is often followed. Jungle women wear rolls and bands with peacock feather tips, and no detail is treated with more care and skill in drawing than the arrangement of the various head-dresses [figs. 1 (9), 3 (10), 4 (11), 5 (12), and 6 (14).]

Nâgas, personages of no small importance in the Buddhist legend, are distinguished by a canopy or crest of hooded cobras. Male figures have five or seven-headed hoods, and the women bear only one [figs. 7 (13) and 8 (15)]. In the Gandhâra sculptures *Nâgas* stand in pulpits or altars, which conceal their snaky terminations. In some Ajantâ pictures they are shewn with snake-tails when in water, but on dry land with legs like other people [fig. 9 (16)].



3 (10).—Musicians. From Wall-Paintings, Cave XVII.

The female demons are especially worthy of attention [fig. 10 (17)]. Of a milder character are the angelic host sometimes described as *Gândhârvas* and *Apsaras*. They are wingless, but are designed with a great feeling of air-borne motion. . . . . . That curious celestial chorister the *Kinnara* occurs occasionally in his ancient Hindû form as a horse-headed monster; but the creature spoken of as a *Kinnara* by writers on Buddhism, akin to the classic syren—a human head and trunk with the tail feathers and legs of a bird—is often represented as singing and playing the cymbals and guitar [fig. 11 (19)].

4 (11).—From Wall-Painting M, Cave I.

In the theory of life adopted by the Buddhists, animals are links in the endless chain of development. It is natural, therefore, that they should be sympathetically treated in art as in legend. And of all creatures the elephant, by its bulk, its docility, and the mystery which, to those who know the animal best, surrounds its temperament and behaviour, most attracted the Hindûs; who assigned it to Indra. Buddhism, however, by adopting the young white elephant as a symbol of divine force, entering the womb of Mâyâ, the Mother of Buddha, gave the creature a still higher place. Later, in the further East the earth-shaking beast became an emblem of universal authority. At Ajantâ are elephants of all colours, including white; and, as in all Hindû work, they are drawn with wonderful character and insight. For centuries in Europe they have served as types of monumental rigidity; but the Hindû, from the first, recognised their acrobatic flexibility and rendered it with great freedom and evident enjoyment [fig. 12 (20)].

It would be easy to match the horses of the A[illegible] pictures from the illuminated pages of old Persian romances, or, indeed, from the stables of moder[illegible]n Princes, where also might be found trappings and

5 (12).—From Wall-Painting, Cave VI.

housings similar to those depicted. These rounded, full-bodied forms, high crests and Roman-nosed heads, are proper to Oriental horses of state, and also to those of romance. No stirrups are shewn in any of the pictures, and a strap seems to have passed from the nose-band over the nose to the curb or chin-strap [figs. 13 (22) and 14 (23)]. With these exceptions, the trappings are those of to-day. The manes, as a rule, are hogged; the tails, in some instances, are neatly clipped; and, as in the retinues of Indian Princes to-day, the legs are sometimes adorned with bangles and ornaments. Horses are also harnessed to springless chariots, the only modern counterparts of which are the machines drawn by elephants and camels in some parts of Rajputana.

Both deer and antelopes are represented; the latter more frequently [fig. 15 (24)] The general colouring of the black-buck is correctly given, but the spots of the *chital* are often added. A green deer is painted in one place, and is an object of worship in another. Antelopes are shown free in the forest, and on carts as if being taken afield to be chased, like the animals that furnish sport to Her Majesty's Buckhounds and their followers. It must be confessed, indeed, that "sport" in the modern acceptation of the word, seems to have been even more popular in ancient times than now. Dogs are led in leash by hurrying huntsmen; rams are encouraged to fight, exactly as in any Indian town to-day; and it would appear that cock-fighting was a popular amusement.

6 (14).—From Wall-Painting, Cave X.

7 (13).—A Nâga Chief.
From Wall-Painting K, Cave I.

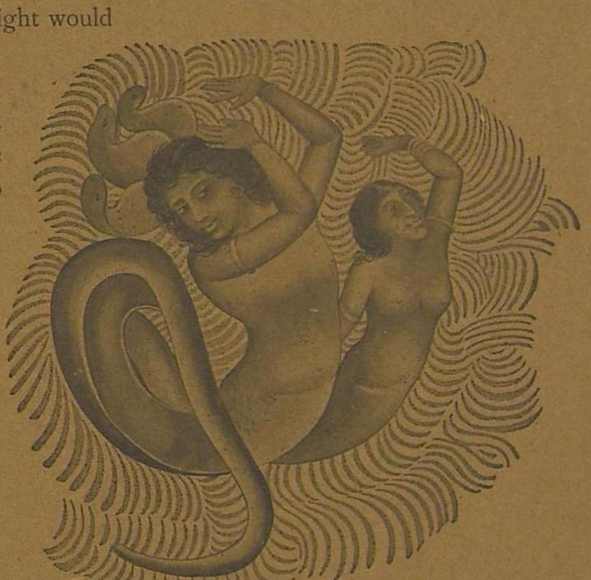
8 (15).—From Wall-Painting N, Cave I.

10 (17).—A Râkshasî.
From Wall-Painting, Cave XVII.

The common hill monkey [fig. 16 (25)], as well as the black-faced langûr [fig. 17 (26)], are painted with thorough appreciation of monkey character. In one picture a monkey has leaped on the back of a buffalo and is blindfolding him [fig. 18 (27)]. This at first sight would seem to be a mere monkey-trick, sketched with the quiet humour that never failed the Ajantâ artists, but it is in reality a representation of the *Mahisa-Jâtaka*, when the Bodhisatta was born as a buffalo and teased by a wicked monkey. There is no trace of the superhuman feats attributed in poetry to Hanumân, the popular monkey god.

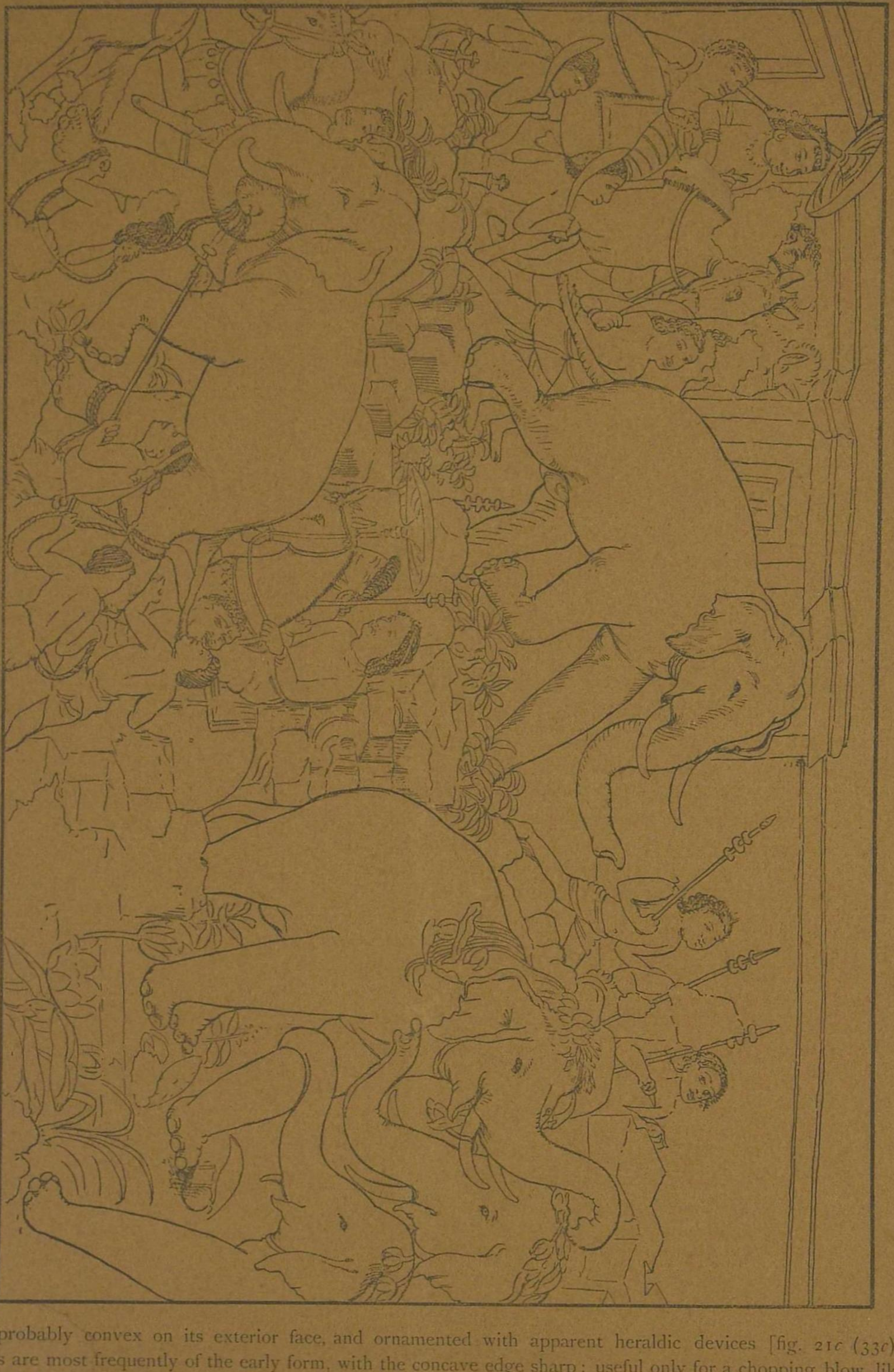
A striking jungle episode is an attack on two bears by hill people, who do not get the best of it. One of the animals lies asleep on his back, shading his eyes with a forepaw, as yet unconscious of its assailants, while the other has one of them tightly hugged, in defiance of those modern naturalists who say that bears never hug [fig. 19 (28)].

Another incident of the jungle is an attack by a pair of wolves on a white elephant. But though the animals are drawn with some spirit [fig. 20 (29)] they were not favourites, and are not repeated.



9 (16).—Nâgas. From Wall-Painting, Cave II.

The weapons are all of primitive forms. Shields are usually oblong in shape, boldly curved in their *longer* dimension, covered with wicker or mat-work patterns, and fringed with hair or silk. In all respects, save the unusual curvature, they strongly resemble the wooden, cane-bound shields of the Dyaks of Borneo in the India Museum [figs. 21*a* (33*a*) and 22 (34)]. Round shields are also given, bearing grotesque masks, fringed with tufts or tassels, and slung over the shoulder with quite modern straps and buckles [figs. 21*b* (33*b*), 23 (35) and 24 (36)]. In Cave X. appears a curious buckler, triangular in



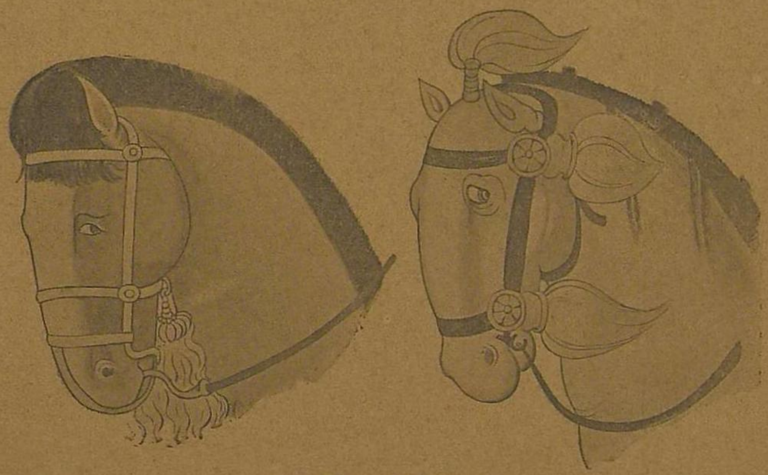
12 (20).—ELEPHANTS. SCENE ILLUSTRATING THE MATI-POSAKA JĀTAKA. FROM WALL-PAINTING, CAVE XVII.

form, probably convex on its exterior face, and ornamented with apparent heraldic devices [fig. 21*c* (33*c*)]. Swords are most frequently of the early form, with the concave edge sharp; useful only for a chopping blow, like the Greek leaf-shaped *kopis*, or the modern Gurkha *kukri*, which is a survival of this ancient type [fig. 25*a* (37*a*)]. Other swords are straight [fig. 26 (38)], with a hilt resembling that of the Malay *kris*, or that of the Western

India hill-man's chopper [fig. 25*b* (37*b*)]. A dagger of frequent occurrence is almost exactly like a weapon now used in Chitral, and among the Siah Posh Kafirs [fig. 25*c* (37*c*)]. The *langue de bœuf* or cross-hilted *katâr*, which is supposed by some to be a peculiarly ancient Hindû weapon, nowhere appears. Rakshâsas and demons brandish a sort of small bill or chopper [fig. 25*d* (37*d*)]. Battle-axes are of the familiar forms here indicated [fig. 25*e* (37*e*)]. A short thrusting spear, with a heavy knob near the wielder's hand, is frequently shewn, as well as the long lance, to which a banneret is sometimes affixed [figs. 25*f* and *g* (37*f* and *g*)].

11 (19).—Kinnaras. From Wall-Paintings.

Bows are of two forms—the simple of one piece, and the classic double-curved bow, probably built up with three [figs. 27 and 28 (39 and 40)]. Bow-making is an art that has never ceased out of the land: painted bows, similar to those shown, are still made in remote parts of India. The *vajra*, or thunder-bolt of Indra, which is an important symbol in Tibet and further eastward, is sometimes shown [fig. 25*h* (37*h*)]. Quivers are shown both square and round, of the familiar European form, with no trace of the pendent flap of the quiver carried by the Bhils of Rajputana to-day. The *chakra*, or war quoit of Northern India, is a simple flat quoit with a sharp outside edge. Here it has a voided cross in the centre [fig. 25*i* (37*i*)]. Staves and maces are always part of the equipment of Oriental soldiers [fig. 29 (41)]. The *ankush*, or elephant goad, is similar to those in use at the present day [figs. 30 *a* and *b* (42 *a* and *b*)]. Banners and ensigns, although painted in somewhat sombre colours—green, brown and grey—were important parts of military pomp. At the top of a slender staff, about eight or nine feet long, is a bordered disc, probably of metal, with three yak or horse-tail tassels at the top and sides. Below this hangs a short horizontal bar, from which floats a longitudinally striped swallow-tailed banner, about six or eight feet long. In some cases the head of the flag-staff is an ornamental spear with turned mouldings. Sometimes a narrow scarf is tied to a staff bearing but a single horse-tail, the two ends enriched by cross stripes hanging in fluttering folds. The umbrella was also an emblem and an ensign, and probably had a bamboo frame-work akin to that of the Chinese umbrella; it was gaily coloured, decorated with richly patterned cloth streamers, and hung with garlands of white jessamine flowers. Fly-flaps, in all essential points, are those of to-day, made of either horse or yak-tails, set in ornamental handles. Fans are of three kinds,



14 (23).—From Wall-Paintings.

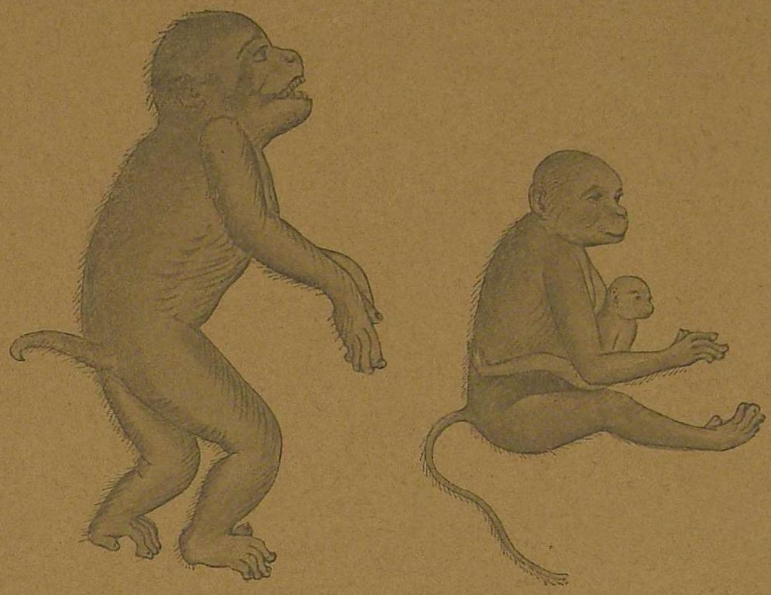
13 (22).—From Wall-Painting P, Cave XVII.

the most frequent being a square of mat, or other fabric set on a handle—the "Peshawar pankha" of this date; the pole fan, wielded with two hands; and the familiar crescent-like form [figs. 31 (43) and 32 (44)]. All are as modern as they are ancient.

With much military and courtly display there seems to have been less music than would content the crowds of the modern East. There are no trumpets, but only the conch shell [fig. 33 (45)]—which also figures as a sacred emblem—and the flute. The *vina* or guitar with many strings [fig. 34 (46)] and the *ektara* or one-stringed banjo [fig. 35 (47)] represent stringed instruments, while the cylindrical drum of earthenware or painted wood, the tambourine, and the cymbals complete the orchestra [fig. 36 (48)]. There is no sign of the violin and bow. The short sticks, struck in unison as a dance accompaniment, scarcely count as music. They have been heard in Western India through many centuries to this day, and duly appear at Ajantâ.

In no detail is the intention of indicating diverse races and castes more clearly shown than in the rendering of costume. Hindûs wear the *dhôtî*, to which reference has already been made as the unit of Hindû treatment of unsewn cloth in universal use. A narrow parallelogram of cloth, wound round the waist and passed between the legs, is secured in a fashion hard to describe in words, but perfectly convenient in practice. Princes, princesses, courtiers, *bhikshus*, soldiers, waiting maids and worshippers, all wear the *dhôtî*, which, to this day—although occasionally adopted by Muhammadans as undress—remains a distinctively Hindû garment. The fabric is shown as elaborately ornamented with bands and stripes, richly patterned, sometimes for the whole length, but more commonly at the ends only. In domestic scenes the Princes wear nothing but the loin cloth; but servants frequently appear in sewn jackets, while women wear bodices often covered with patterns. Instead of the bodice—the Indian form of which has little or no back and seldom covers the shoulder—a bosom-supporting band is worn by many women. It is possible that foreign servants are indicated by the women who wear sleeved jackets that descend to the waist. A quaint short jacket worn by elephant drivers and soldiers, resembles one now in common use among Hindû menials of lower caste. The narrow scarf with long free ends, which in these days is worn as a badge of gentility, is another distinctly Hindû item of dress of constant occurrence. With the exception of the figures in the older paintings in Caves IX. and X., which are the earliest, no turbans are shewn. Princes and nobles wear jewelled head-gear, and women a profusion of flowers and ornaments; soldiers and *bhikshus* or monks are mainly bare-headed; while foreigners, servants, and mendicants wear a variety of "made" caps and hoods. Some of the latter are still extant; fig. 37*a* (49*a*) is a

15 (24). Antelope. From Wall-Painting, Cave X.

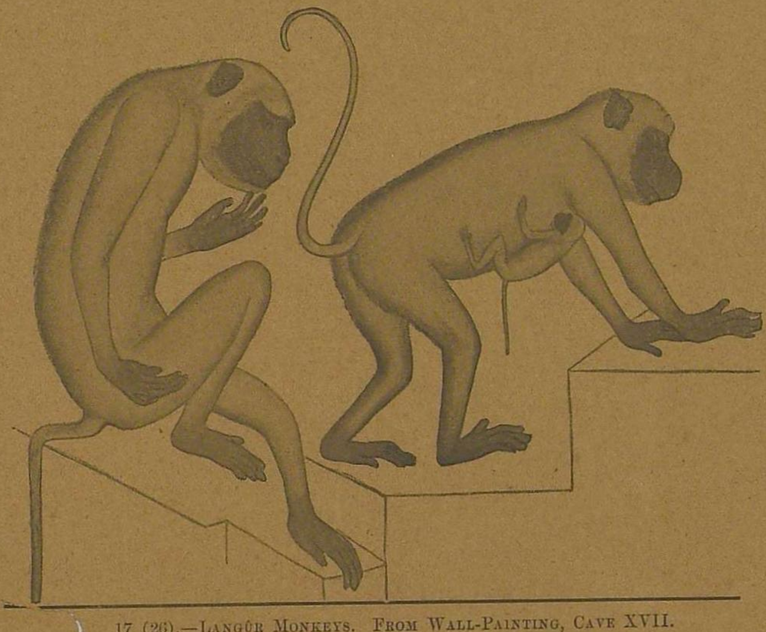


16 (25).—Monkeys. From Wall-Painting, Cave I.

pattern worn by devotees and some Hindûs as undress, and by children as a cold-weather hood. Other head-coverings are indicated in fig. 37 (49).

The turbans in Caves IX. and X. are interwound, in the ancient manner, with the long black hair of the unmistakeable aborigines who wear them [figs. 38 (50) and 39 (51)].

Entirely different in character, and belonging to another latitude, are the tailor-made garments in which Persians are dressed. The conical cap, with encircling roll, is still in use among the Parsees [fig. 37*c* (49*c*)]; and the fashioned coat, with its parti-coloured and embroidered insertions, is familiar in durbars; while the leg-bindings or *pattis* are the daily wear of some of our frontier regiments—and all belong, broadly speaking, to Persia.



17 (26).—Langûr Monkeys. From Wall-Painting, Cave XVII.

18 (27).—Scene illustrating the Mahisa-Jâtaka. From Wall-Painting N, Cave XVII.

Some reference should be made to the profusion of jewelled ornaments of goldsmiths' work everywhere displayed. Strings of pearls and precious stones are hung on houses, doorways, and canopy-pillars, and worn by men and women. Hindû poetry constantly speaks of them as festive decorations of towns and houses, till it is not surprising that conventionalised jewelry should come to be a regular element of painted and carved architectural ornament. Beaten work, twisted wire and filigrain, seem also to have been common, and were skilfully combined with stones [figs. 40 (52)

20 (29).—Wolves. From Wall-Painting, Cave XVII.

19 (28).—Bear Hugging a Man. From Wall-Painting U, Cave XVII.

and 41 (53)]. Some of the tiaras worn by Princes are nothing short of splendid in their elaboration. After tiaras and the head ornaments worn by women [figs. 1 (9) and 4 (11)] may be ranked the jewelled baldric worn diagonally across the body from the left shoulder, which probably enclosed the canonical Brahmanical cord, *jâneu* or *upavita*. This was not worn by the women, whose girdle encircled the hips, and was clasped in front by a brooch or buckle. A similar belt was worn by men, but not so low down. In Western India the silver chain belt, with a clasp and pendants in front, is still worn. The nose-ring nowhere appears, and there are no toe-rings; but ear-rings, necklaces, armlets, bracelets, anklets and finger-rings adorn both men and women, nor is there any end to their variety of design [figs. 1 (9), 4 (11), 5 (12), and 41 (53)]. Ribbons and ties of silk or cotton are combined with necklaces and other ornaments; their fluttering fillet ends are unlike anything now in use, plaited braids and tassels being preferred. The massive and primitive character of the ornaments worn by the figures in Caves IX. and X., are in strong contrast with the Hindû work noticed above [figs. 42 (54) and 43 (55)].

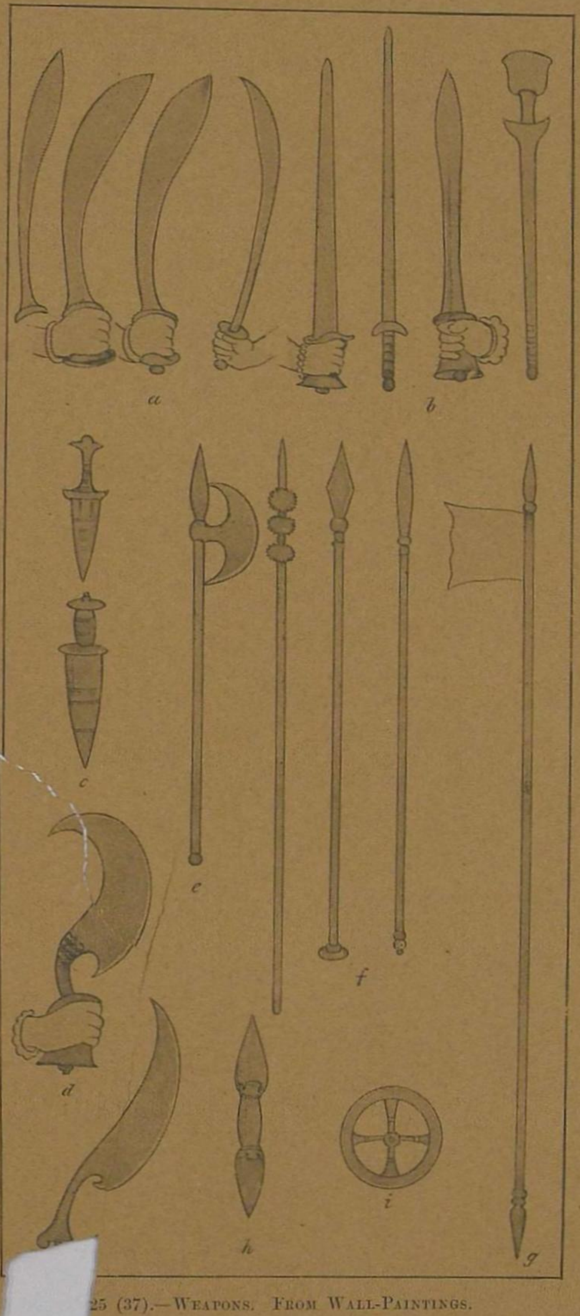
21 (33).—Shields. From Wall-Paintings.

23 (35).—Shield and Sword. From Wall-Painting, Cave II.

22 (34).—From Wall-Painting, Cave XVII.

24 (36).—Shield. From Wall-Painting, Cave I.

There is no appreciable difference from modern Indian fashions in the form of the earthen and metal vessels shown in domestic and ceremonial use. Flowers and garlands were carried on circular brass trays; milk pots were piled one on another; earthen jars were slung with knotted cords to keep eatables out of the reach of vermin, or to cool water, and spittoons were used precisely as now. The swinging thurible or incense-burner seems, however, to be superseded in these days by a chafing dish of hot coals borne in the hand. A few illustrations of the different shapes of vessels are given in figs. 44 (56) and 45 (57).



25 (37).—Weapons. From Wall-Paintings.

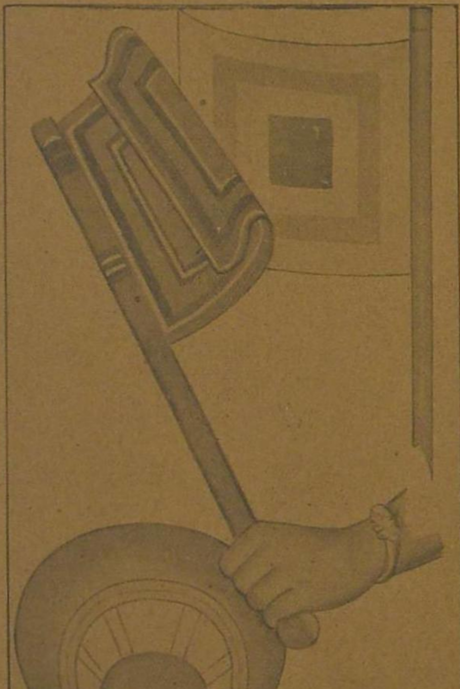
26 (38).—Sword. From Wall-Painting R, Cave XVII.

27 (39).—From Wall-Painting P, Cave XVII.

29 (41).—Spear and Mace.

28 (40).—Bow.
From Wall-Painting.

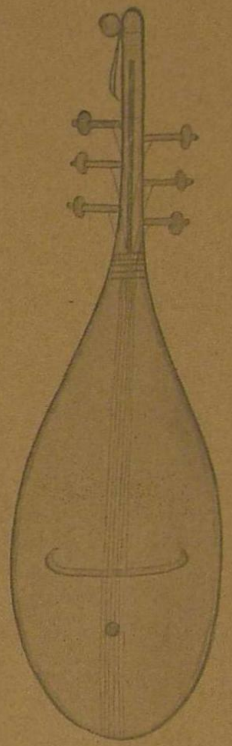
30 (42).—Club and Elephant Goads.



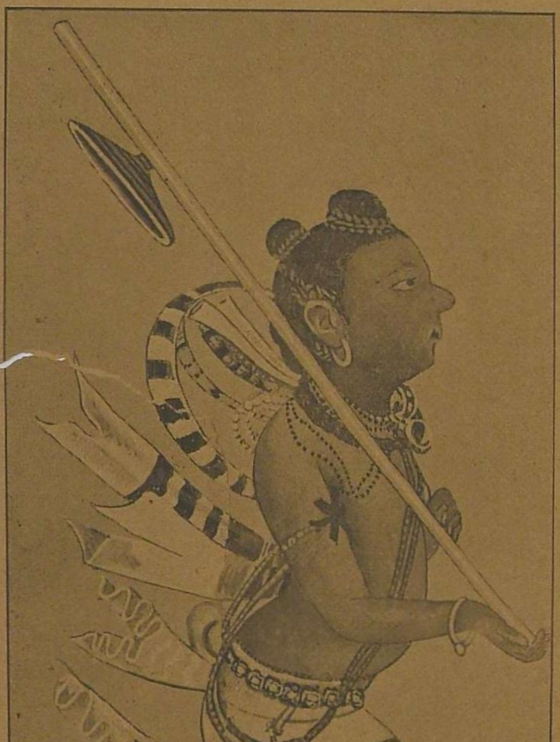
31 (43).—Fans. From Wall-Paintings.

32 (44).—Woman with Pankha. From Wall-Painting, Cave X

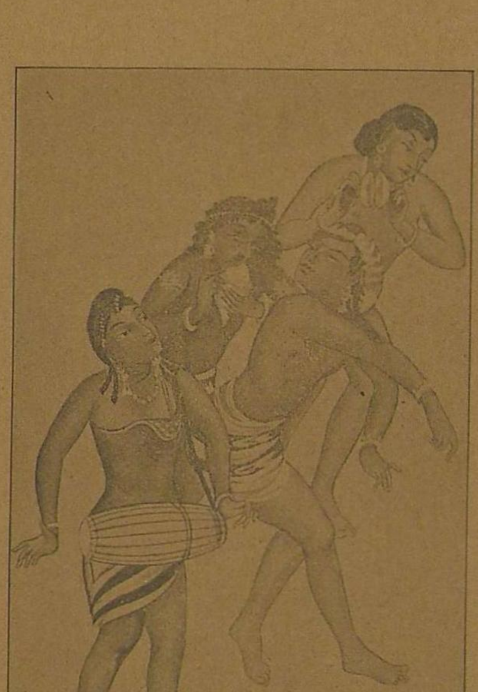
33 (45).—Blowing the Conch. From Wall-Painting, Cave II.



34 (46).—Vina. From Wall-Painting, Cave XVII.

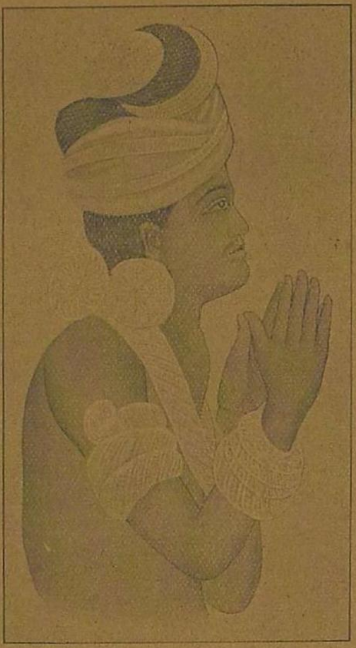


35 (47).—From Wall-Painting in Verandah, Cave XVII.

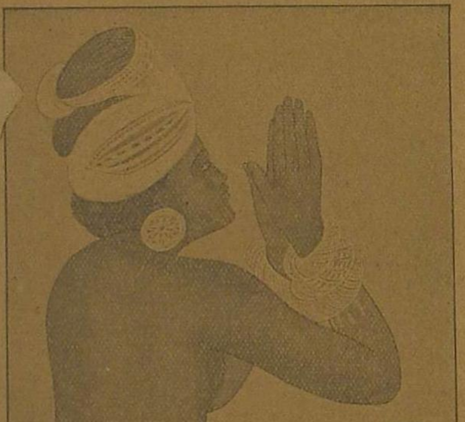


36 (48).—From Wall-Painting, Cave I.

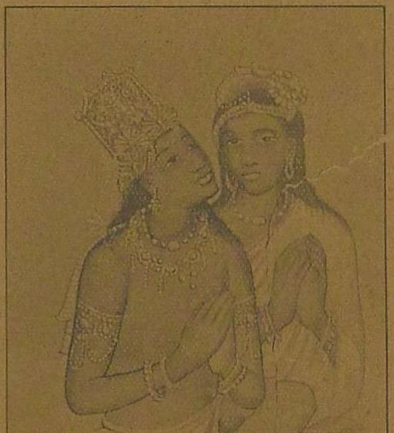
37 (49).—Head-Dresses. From Wall-Paintings.



40 (52).—From Wall-Painting H, Cave IX.



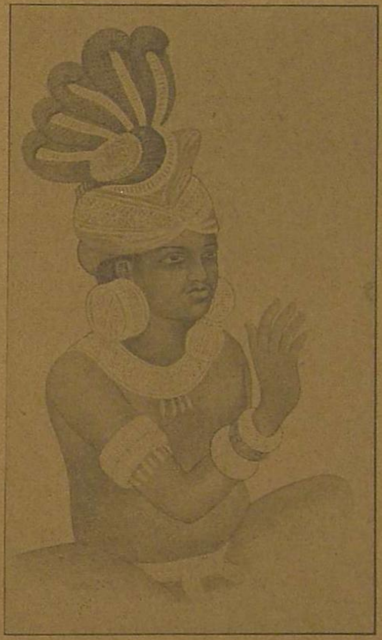
38 (50).—From Wall-Painting H, Cave IX.



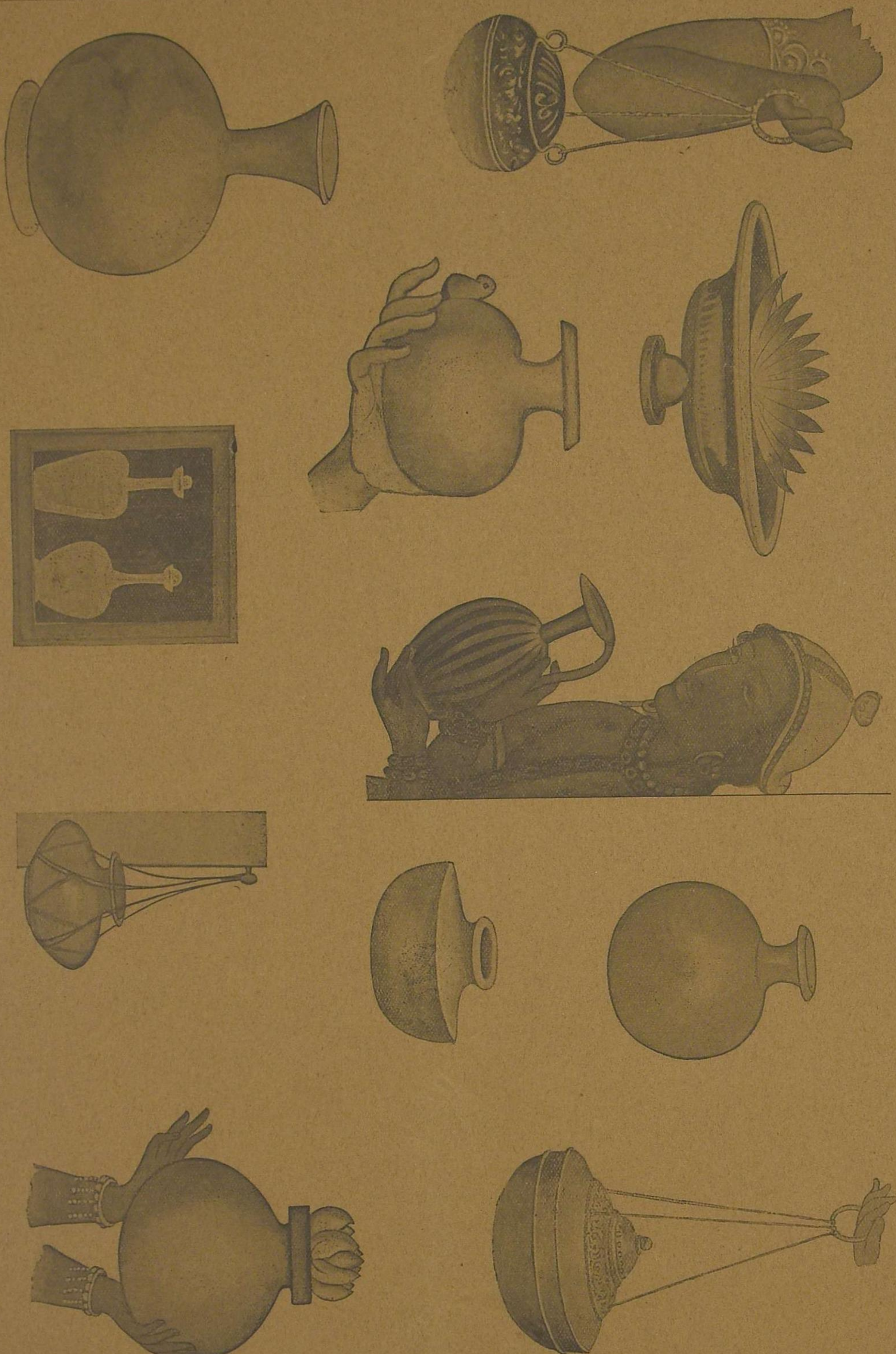
39 (51).—From Wall-Painting, Cave IX.

41 (53).—From Wall-Painting, Cave I.

42 (54).—From Wall-Painting II, Cave IX.



43 (55).—From Wall-Painting II, Cave IX.



44 (56).—Different Shapes of Vessels. From Wall-Paintings.

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